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Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330
RCC/ANIMALS BRANCH

Letter No. 2537

Dec. 20, 1991

FOREST RECEIPTS -- Forty-one states and Puerto Rico will receive more than \$323 million in national forest receipts for fiscal year 1991, says **F. Dale Robertson**, chief of USDA's Forest Service. Actual 1991 receipts collected from the sale & use of national forest resources totaled \$1.29 billion. By law, 25 percent of the revenues are returned to the states where the lands are located. The states must use the funds for schools and roads. **Contact: Denver James** (202) 205-1781.

PLASTIC CARDS INSTEAD OF FOOD STAMPS -- USDA is proposing to let food stamp recipients buy their food using plastic cards -- like those used to access bank accounts electronically -- instead of food stamps. "We are proposing this step into the electronic age to make it easier for the millions of Americans who rely on the food stamp program at some point in their lives," Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** says. Besides providing better service and financial flexibility to recipients, the proposal insures that food dollars are spent on food, cuts fraud and trafficking and streamlines administration. **Contact: Phil Shanholtzer** (703) 305-2313.

FARM INCOME -- Nominal net cash & net farm incomes, after rising each year from the mid-1980's through 1990, will return to 1988-89 levels for 1991 & 1992, USDA economists say. Lower livestock receipts, lower government payments & continued higher expenses will leave net cash income at an estimated \$58 billion in 1991 and \$52 billion to \$57 billion in 1992. USDA economists say net farm income will be \$44 billion in 1991 & \$40 to \$46 billion in 1992. **Contact: Bob Dubman** (202) 219-0809.

BENEFICIAL BACTERIA that stifle downy brome, one of the worst weeds in wheat, are being tested in five Western states by USDA scientists. "The bacteria occur naturally in soil and produce a toxin that stunts downy brome and prevents some of its seeds from sprouting, but leaves the wheat plants unharmed," says **Ann C. Kennedy**, a soil microbiologist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Pullman, Wash. Downy brome, also known as cheatgrass, costs wheat growers more than \$300 million each year in lower yields, Kennedy says. **Contact: Ann C. Kennedy** (509) 335-1554.

NEW REPORTS CATALOGUE -- USDA'S Economic Research Service has published the winter edition of "Reports," a catalog of monographs, periodicals, data products & video tapes. The catalog also lists USDA economic contacts & their phone numbers. For a free copy of "Reports," **contact: Donnell Royster** (202) 219-0515.

1991-CROP WHEAT may not enter the farmer-owned reserve, says Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan**, since neither condition for entry was met. The conditions include the average market price being less than 120 percent of the wheat price support rate for 90 days preceding the announcement and the 1991 estimated wheat ending stock-to-use ratio be more than 37.5 percent. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

A MUTANT CORN has led USDA scientists to challenge a century-old hypothesis of how plants grow. While working at the University of Missouri, **Allan D. Wright**, now a scientist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Ames, Iowa, found a mutant corn that is defective in making an amino acid called tryptophan. Scientists had thought that plants must have this amino acid to grow. This new knowledge could help scientists eventually breed stress-tolerant crops and develop growth regulators to improve the quality of food crops. **Contact: Allen D. Wright (301) 344-3632.**

PERSONNEL CHANGES -- Catherine Bertini, USDA assistant secretary for food & consumer services, has been appointed to a five-year term as the next executive director of the World Food program by United Nations Secretary General **Xavier Perez de Cuellar** and the Food and Agriculture Organization Director General **Edouard Saouma**. Her appointment begins in April 1992 ... Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** has named Vermont state legislator **Gwen Bronson** as director of intergovernmental affairs for USDA, effective Jan. 6. Bronson has served six terms in the Vermont legislature as the representative from the Shelburne-Charlotte District. **Contact: Roger Runningen (202) 720-4623.**

GRANTS FOR HOMELESS -- USDA has awarded more than \$250,000 in grants to six non-profit organizations to provide more food assistance to homeless Americans. "The main focus of these projects is to encourage homeless people to make use of their food stamp eligibility," says **Catherine Bertini**, assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services. **Contact: Phil Shanholtzer (703) 305-2313.**

CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE AT 50 PERCENT MARK -- Conservation plans prepared by farmers & ranchers to comply with Farm Bill conservation compliance requirements have been fully implemented on nearly half of the highly erodible cropland in the U.S. "we're pleased to reach the halfway point," says **William Richards**, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service, "but we know there is still a big job ahead. Producers are expected to apply their conservation compliance plans on schedule." Richards encourages producers to start even earlier than scheduled, especially if they are unfamiliar with any agreed-upon practices. **Contact: Mary Stine (202) 720-4805.**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU from all the staff at USDA Radio-TV Division: **Vic Powell, Brenda Curtis, Maria Bynum, Gary Crawford, Marci Hilt, DeBoria Janifer, Pat O'Leary, Lisa Robinson, Mocile Trotter & Lynn Wyvill.**

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1802 -- Over the last decade many miraculous claims have been made for vitamin C. **Jim Henry** explores the fact & the fantasy of vitamin C. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1284 -- Use that old Christmas tree; post-holiday dieting; eating your New Year's resolution; the homeless in rural areas; food stamp changes on the way. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1793 -- USDA News Highlights; problems in Soviet grain ports; higher wheat/corn prices in store for '92; comments sought on wool & mohair program. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1451 -- Neutralizing plant pathogens; coordinated research; sugar shuts out salmonella; antibiotic alternative; bacterial benefits. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Thurs., Dec. 26, use that Christmas tree; Tues., Dec. 31, crop/weather update, ag prices, world tobacco situation; Fri., Jan. 3, pork production; Mon., Jan. 6, dairy product output, horticultural exports. **(These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.)**

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on the 1991 Yearbook of Agriculture; **Lynn Wyvill** takes a look at the Good Earth Award; **DeBoria Janifer** reports on holiday houseplants.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on weather & crops; USDA World Board chairman **James Donald** on U.S. crop production; USDA economist **Bob Skinner** on cotton production; USDA economist **Cathy Green** on specialty crops; USDA economist **Tom Tice** on feed.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on cataract research; **Pat O'Leary** takes a look at farm marketing in Poland; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on divining rod.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update**, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:
Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST, **Saturdays** from 10 - 10:45 a.m., EST, and **Mondays** from 8 - 8:45 a.m., EST.

OFFMIKE

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING...for listeners conducted by **Tom Steever** (KSOO, Sioux Falls, S.D.) included taking his 5-9 a.m. show to a local hog farm & to the Sioux Falls stockyard. Tom says the interviews helped to explain how pork is grown & marketed in his area. He did a similar program on dairy last June. Tom has some "tough duty" coming up in January -- his station is doing a Caribbean cruise promotion and he has to host the trip.

U.S.- SOVIET FOOD AID...project aims to airlift pork to Moscow, says **Ronald Severson** (WCMY, Ottawa, Ill.). His station has created a committee of ag leaders to raise funds from farmers & the ag industry to buy the pork. Early plans call for delivery in January. Ron says many ag organizations have expressed interest in the project. If you want more info, call Ron at (815) 434-6050.

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Office of Public Affairs
Radio-TV Division
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Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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BIG NEWS...in west Texas is the damage to the cotton crop from a freeze earlier this year. **James Stewart** (KFYO, Lubbock) says harvest reports indicate about a third of the crop was lost. That represents a \$578 million loss to the 26-county area. Jim says the recent FFA & NAFB conferences in Kansas City kept him busy. He filed 32 reports on FFA activities. He says it's the 17th year he's covered the event.

UPDATE...**Herb Plambeck** (Living History Farms, Des Moines, Iowa) has written a 24-page update to his book about farm broadcasting, "Never A Dull Moment." The book is now in its third printing. The update covers 1991 events. Here's a deal: Herb will give "Chapter 31" free to anyone who bought the book if they'll send a stamped, self-addressed #10 envelope to him at 2909 Woodland Ave., #602, Des Moines, Iowa 50312. Herb says he's sold more than 200 copies to farm broadcasters.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division